



# Sermon 1

## Does God Love Your City?

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Matthew 9:36

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”.*

### Introduction

**D**oes God love your city? Today, we are going to try to answer that question. But before we do, let’s look at some interesting things about cities. According to some studies, a city is a highly populated and highly organized place that serves as the epicenter of everything: money, culture, politics, and more. Cities are filled with skyscrapers, roads, subways, and a ton of services. Additionally, in cities, there are people from all places and cultures, and they are places where many exciting things happen, such as innovation, education, and work.

Now, let’s talk about some of the largest cities in the world:

- Tokyo, in Japan is one of the most populous cities on the planet. It is famous for being highly technological and having a super-cool modern culture.
- New York, in the United States is like the center of everything, with a lot of money, trade, and pop culture.
- London, the capital of England and the United Kingdom is a historic city that still plays a significant role in the world economy and politics.

- Beijing is China's capital and a mega-important place for politics and culture.
- Sao Paulo, Brazil is where everything happens in South America. It has a lot of trade and fun culture.
- Mumbai, India is a growing city and is super important for business.
- Lagos, Nigeria is a major African financial center that has been described as the cultural, financial and entertainment capital of Africa.

Now, what about the emotional issues of people living in cities?

It turns out that living in the city isn't always like it's portrayed in the movies. People in the city can feel stressed because everything moves fast, and traffic can be a mess. Despite being surrounded by a lot of people, some may feel lonely because they lack deep connections with others. Anxiety can also be an issue, as competition and the pressure to succeed can be intense. At times, depression can also be more common in cities because life can be intense.

But here is the good news, ***God loves cities! And, that means He loves the people who live in them, with all their problems and emotions.*** God has a giant heart and is moved when He sees people going through difficult times. So, how does God show His love for the cities? Let's look at three things that demonstrate His love in action.

## Development

### 1. God Sends Messengers to Cities

Did you know that the first mention of the word city in the Bible was the city that Cain built and named after his son, Enoch (Genesis 4:17, NIV)? It turns out that Enoch came from a family with a history of serious issues. His descendants created cities where some crazy stuff happened, like multiple marriages and murders, but they also were creative with music and art. After a great flood, things did not improve. Noah's grandchildren, specifically the sons of Ham, started building some wicked cities (Genesis 10:6-12, NIV), and the climax was when they built the Tower of Babel with the idea of becoming famous (Genesis 11:4, NIV).

In the Bible, there are several cities, some of the most famous being Babylon, Ur of the Chaldeans, Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh, and Jerusalem. Most of these cities were like the epicenter of evil and sin. But surprisingly, despite all their disasters/problems, God did not give up on them and He sent messengers with a message of compassion, and an opportunity to change. We can read an example of this is the story of Jonah (Read the book of Jonah).

God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh to give them a warning. Now, Nineveh was an extremely violent place filled with wickedness

(Nahum 3:1, NIV). So bad, that there is an ancient scroll that says the kings of Nineveh would grab their enemies and literally burn them after stripping off their skin. It was insane!

But despite all their violence and wickedness, God didn't want to give up on them without giving them a chance to change. He sent Jonah, a prophet, to warn them. And you know what? The city of Nineveh responded with repentance (Jonah 3:5-10, NIV).

Did you know that God also wants to see changes and repentance in cities today? That is why He sends messengers! Read what God says through one of His messengers: "As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11, NIV).

But wait, this didn't just happen in ancient times! God still wants to see changes in our cities today. It's like He's saying, "Hey, I don't want to miss out on the good things in your cities. I want you to repent and change for the better."

Think about your own city. It may be full of good things, but it's also likely to have its own issues, problems, crimes, etc. But still, God keeps sending people to your city to show love and say, "Hey, I'm here! Let's change this together."

So, if you ever wonder if God cares about your city, the answer is yes, He does! God wants every city to be a place where people can live in peace, prosperity, and harmony. He's willing to use people like you to make that happen. So, get excited and be part of the change in your city!

So, young people, God is in the business of transforming even the most rebellious and crazy cities. That's love in action!

## 2. God Shows Compassion for Cities

It turns out that God not only sends messengers but also shows great empathy for the people living in those cities, especially when they are going through tough times. Look at this passage from Matthew 9:35-36:

*"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (NIV)*

And what does it mean to have *compassion*? In short, it means putting yourself in another person shoes and understanding their problems and pains. Yes, God deeply cares about the people in cities, especially when they are going through difficult times!

Imagine this: your city can be a place full of chaos, where it sometimes feels like everyone is lost in the confusion. People may feel lonely, stressed, sick, or are dealing with other issues. But God is there! Jesus Himself moved through the cities, teaching and healing people. When He saw the crowd, His heart was moved. It's like He wanted to say, "Guys, I'm here for you. You're not alone in this."

The next time you feel overwhelmed by everything happening in your city, remember that God understands you. He empathizes with you and everyone else. No matter how messy the world may feel, God is willing to be there and take care of us. That's pure love in action!

### **3. God Transforms Cities**

So far, we've talked about how God sends messengers into cities and how He feels compassion for the people who live there. But that's not all! God is also an expert in giving cities a makeover. Do you remember the story of Saul of Tarsus?

One day, Saul was on his mission to persecute Christians and heading to Damascus to do his thing. But wait, here's the interesting part: Jesus Himself appeared to him on the way and completely changed his life! The story is in Acts 9:1-6. Saul, who used to be the worst enemy of Christians, transformed into Paul, one of the most important apostles of all time.

Imagine this: Saul, the persecutor of Christians, became a guy who planted churches everywhere and became a great teacher of the gospel. God Upgraded Saul to someone completely different.

What does this teach us? God has immense power to transform not only individuals but also entire cities. When His grace is in action, everything can change. If you ever think your city needs a change, remember that God is the expert in transforming people and things. He is an artist in action, making everything better!

### **Conclusion**

God has a special love for cities. Throughout the Bible, we've seen how He shows His love in incredible ways: He sends messages, He is super understanding, and He even changes extremely sinful cities. As young people of God, it is our duty to love our cities and expand the Kingdom of God within them. Always remember that God is very active in our cities, and we can be instruments of His love and compassion. Let's pray for God's love to continue flowing and transforming our cities.